

**NEWINGTON PARKS & RECREATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2008
MEETING MINUTES**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Jeff Hedberg, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Board: Jeff Hedberg (left at 7:35 PM), A. Neal Forte (left a 7:01 PM, returned at 7:45 PM), Jonathan Boni (arrived at 7:02 PM), Bill DeBlasio, Eileen Francolino, Robert Tofeldt (arrived at 7:18 PM), Mary Udice, John Kennedy (arrived at 7:45 PM), Kenneth Leggo, Jeff Perillo (arrived at 7:10 PM), Don Woods

Staff: Acting Superintendent Dennis Bonitsky, Recreation Supervisors Ted Fravel and Alison Alberghini

Public: Al Dodson, Molly Martin, Kelsey Cronin

Jeff Hedberg explained that some Board members would be arriving late due to the beginning of the sports season. He also stated that he would be leaving early and Kenneth Leggo, Secretary, would be leading the meeting until the return of Vice-Chairperson A. Neal Forte who was attending another meeting. Jeff stated that the Town Council has approved the \$25,000 for the site work and plan development of the synthetic turf field and that John Kennedy would meet with the Synthetic Turf Field Subcommittee after tonight's Board meeting.

Jeff asked the Board for their permission to move up Public Participation on the Agenda; the Board was in agreement.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A. Al Dodson – Swimming Pool Use

Al Dodson, 1105 Harbor View Drive, New Britain, Molly Martin, 100 Miami Avenue, Newington, and Kelsey Cronin, 20 Oxford Drive, Newington introduced themselves. Mr. Dodson indicated that his swim club camp is requesting the use of the Churchill Park Pool for a nine week period beginning June 23rd through August 22nd Monday through Friday from 6:15 to 8:30 AM and on Saturday from 8:00 to 10:00 AM. This club used the pool last year for an 8 week/two day period during the same timeframe. Last year's club was comprised of 18 registrants with 16 finishing the camp. Mr. Dodson gave the Board his coaching background and distributed materials relating to his background and the requirements of his swim club camp. The camps' registrants are Newington's high school and selected middle school children. Concerns regarding granting permission to Mr. Dodson's swim club camp are that usually other camps using Park and Recreation facilities give back a percentage of their fee to Parks and Recreation and this swim club camp has not done so in the past. Jeff asked Mr. Dodson what his swim club camp fees are and Mr. Dodson responded \$200 per person. Eileen's concern was that the Newington Swim Club is a not-for-profit organization and this is a private camp, and a portion of the fee should be returned to Parks and Recreation for use of the Churchill Park pool facility. Jeff Perillo asked about insurance and Mr. Dodson responded that the swim club is covered through the United States Swimming Association. Jeff indicated to Mr. Dodson, Ms. Cronin, and Ms. Martin that this request will be reviewed by the Board, tabled for this evening, and discussed at the May meeting.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 12, 2008

MOTION: Mary Udice made a motion to approve the minutes of March 12, 2008, Robert Tofeldt seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion to approve the minutes of March 12, 2008 was unanimously approved with a 7-1 vote, Don Woods abstained since he was not in attendance at the March meeting.

V. CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS/REPORT

A. FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dennis Bonitsky indicated that the Board had his monthly report in their packets. Bill asked about Badger Field and Dennis responded that it is presently off-line at least until the Fall. Bill indicated that he has driven past there and some kids have been practicing on the field and suggested that it should be gated and closed. Jeff Perillo asked about the large log that has been in the Midget Football Field since the tree was cut down two years ago, and indicated that it causes an accessibility problem. Additionally, there is some brush by the fence that needs to be cleaned up. Bob asked about purchasing a bucket truck instead of using Wethersfield's equipment. Dennis explained that Wethersfield's equipment is used for larger trees and that Newington has equipment for smaller tasks. Bill suggested that departments get together to purchase a bucket truck so it can be used for varying tasks. Don commented that the big net by Clem Lemire is down.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. MASTER PLAN – APPOINT SUBCOMMITTEE TO ESTABLISH PRIORITIES

The subcommittee has not met, therefore this item will be tabled until the May meeting.

B. SYNTHETIC TURF FIELD STUDY COMMITTEE

The Synthetic Turf Field Study Committee will meet after this evening's Board meeting.

C. EXTRAVAGANZA SUBCOMMITTEE

Jeff reported earlier that Neal, Ted, and himself met with Brian from Bryson Vendors about paying a flat fee for items such as fried dough and french fries, and 25% of the revenues will be returned to Parks and Recreation. There will be no labor output and it will be a clean profit. Additionally, Frank Flood will provide soft serve ice cream and pay \$1,000 upfront and give 10% of all revenues to Parks and Recreation. Parks and Recreation will be responsible for all drinks and will have three or four different areas to sell these drinks. Alison indicated that Coke will deliver cartons of soda and the big barrels to serve them out of. Ted will be finalizing contracts for all vendors, including coffee and kettle corn, etc. within the next week.

Bob has finalized plans for a Bowling Night and has secured a sponsor for this event.

D. GOLF TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

Ted reported that many sponsors have already signed up. He will contact Bob Gai.

E. ROCK CATS NEWINGTON DAY

Mary reported that Newington Day is scheduled for July 24th. The John Wallace teacher's band School Daze will be performing at the Stadium that evening. Parks and Recreation will be given 200 tickets on consignment to sell for this day. There will also be a corporate row for businesses. Mary and Neal have been working with Jonathan Lissitchuk of the New Britain Rock Cats on this event.

F. CHARTER REVISION

Jeff reported earlier that the Charter Revision Committee will be meeting on April 10th. He stated that he and Neal will attend this meeting, and other Board members are welcome. He asked the Board members if they had any suggestions for the Charter Revision Committee. Don indicated that he would like to see the wording about concurrence removed from the Charter. Mary agreed with Don, but stated that the Parks and Recreation Board should be a part of the hiring process and representation on any interview committees.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. SPRING/SUMMER UPDATE

Eileen stated that she has been asked about field usage for an Ultimate Frisbee League. Ken indicated that he has seen people playing Frisbee on the upper softball field at the high school in the evenings. John stated that field space is very tough to get during the season and maybe a Frisbee league can consider waiting until the schools and league seasons end. Eileen will speak to those interested parties to get more information and a time frame.

Ken asked about the Churchill Park softball field. He indicated that the conditions of this field are not the best. Dennis stated Parks and Grounds is aware of this and hopes to plant some grass soon.

Don asked for the Board's indulgence on a few matters that he would like to discuss. The first matter concerns Wendy's administrative leave and he asked why the Board was never officially informed of this by the Town Manager. He feels that the Board should not have been slighted on this important matter. Bob suggested inviting the Town Manager to the next meeting so he could explain why the Board was not made aware of Wendy's administrative leave. Neal responded that is a personnel matter and the Town Manager probably informed the Chairperson.

Don next questioned the Town Council's decision to cut the \$122,500 Parks and Playground budget and the \$50,000 Resurfacing budget. The Parks and Recreation budget pays a lot for day to day routine responsibilities, and having both of these budgets cut is detrimental to the operating budget. The Master Plan cost \$50,000 to prepare and how can these tasks get completed without the proper funding. Don felt that due to many factors such as a new Town Council, a new Parks and Recreation Board, and Wendy's leave caused the Town Council not to be aware of the fact that these items needed to be in the Parks and Recreation budget. The Town Council heard that there was a carryover of approximately \$60,000 and did not realize that those funds were already earmarked for Spring spending. He felt that Town Council members need to be made aware of the elimination of these funds. Mary asked Jonathan to speak to his father who is a Town Councilor and make him aware of the elimination of these funds.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no Public Participation.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: John Kennedy made a motion to adjourn, Jonathan Boni seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion to adjourn was unanimously approved at 8:32 PM with a 10-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Whitney
Secretary to the Board